Mark Raymond Atteberry

Bipolar Blues

A Collection of Poems

Bipolar Blues

A Collection of Poems

by

Mark Raymond Atteberry

Foreword by

Beth Hammett

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"My hallucinations are endless. This is what I've always gone through: the end of my faith in history, the neglect of my principles. I shall say no more about this; poets and visionaries would be jealous. I am the richest one of all. A thousand times, and I shall hoard it like the sea."

Arthur Rimbaud - *A Season in Hell* - A Night in Hell, 1873

"For the secret of man's being is not only to live, but to have something to live for. Without a stable conception of the object of life, man would not consent to go on living, and would rather destroy himself than remain on earth…That is true."

Fyodor Dostoyevsky - *The Brothers Karamazov*, 1880

"One's life is not always the thing it is supposed to be - has its periods and periods - dark, light, dark again - spots, errors, damned foolishnesses… I have nothing to regret, nothing to wish reversed."

Walt Whitman in conversation with Horace Traubel -
With Walt Whitman at Camden, 1914

Acknowledgements

This collection of work could not be presented here nor most of it composed without the support of Nephi Ferguson, to whom these pages are dedicated with love, devotion and an abundance of thanks. We've had quite a journey, one some people may flout yet many might envy, and I look forward to spending the rest of our lives being there for each other, both in good times and when dark clouds linger. Thanks for always pulling me out of the storm!

I'd like to thank my parents for their support and to apologize for all the years I repeatedly disrupted the household harmony. It was a rough road at times and I wouldn't have blamed you if you'd have ditched me in a parking lot somewhere.

The “Garage Poems” collection, including the selections presented here, is dedicated to the bronco bustin' Dickinson cowboy Mike Hammett. You're a hell of a friend - thanks for all the inspiration!

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Foreword

As an optimistic person, seldom do I delve into the dark side of life. However, the majority of the works on the proceeding pages do just that. His words force me to confront life as it often is and not as I see it. Each of us live our minutes, our hours, and our days in different ways, and for those in states of perpetual darkness, there is no laughter, only fear. It could be the snap of a twig or a knock on the door which causes these intellectuals to remain within the confined walls of their homes. Whatever the cause, the effect can produce thought provoking results. The author's life is chronicled on the pages that follow. It is not always pleasant, but it is real.

On rare days when the sun shines brilliantly in the author's mind, normalcy attempts to creep into his life. Words flutter across the pages like butterflies dancing amidst brightly colored flowers. His rhymes remind of playing London Bridge and Red Rover on rolling fields of green clover during my childhood days. It is on these days the author's schemes embrace life—simple and innocent but often long ago and faraway.

Regardless of the memory the author is reliving, he does it with precision and clairvoyance. It is a privilege to join him on his journey.

Beth Hammett
Community College Writing Instructor
Author of *Developmental Writing Workshop*, *Natalie: Diary of a Senior Year* and Co-Author of *College 411*

Introduction

These works are placed mostly in chronological order with the exception of the Bipolar Blues collection which is presented numerically. The earlier works have been left intact for this first publication in order to show the progression of the work. I know some of these poems still need some work and I will likely change several for future presentation. The important thing for me at this time, though, is to share the thoughts and emotions and to honor people in my life by recognizing them in writing.

Most of the works on these pages come from a deep, dark place and I've never been exactly sure who I wanted to share them with other than the few who have already read most of them. The sentiments are personal, the emotions are raw and I've never cared for explaining myself to others. A nagging urge to be heard, however, recently snuck up on me and doesn't seem to want to leave. My hope is for these works to help someone to understand a struggling loved one just a little better or to serve as a tool for someone struggling who is constantly being asked to describe their feelings.

The journey of my life with bipolar disorder would have been for naught if I didn't try to do something to make someone else's journey a little easier by describing mine. So, at the risk of exposing myself and my weaknesses, I give you the Bipolar Blues collection and other favored poems.

Mark Raymond Atteberry

“Get that organ grinder warmed up, folks.
The monkey feels like dancing!”

And dance I shall…

Selections From
The
Upside Down and Sideways
Collection

Welcome…Don't Be Afraid

You can come into my world
But it will be on my terms
And I may not be able to help you if you get scared.

Are You Serious?

"Look at your life. What do you have to be so sad about?"
The next person who says these words to me better be ready to run.

Touches of Brilliance within the Chaos

Touches of brilliance within the chaos of my soul
Struggling daily with the heavy task of life within the prison of my mind
How do you explain to others
Things you don't even understand yourself?

Life

Life sure has a lot of surprises
And a lot of ups and downs.
Too many people wear disguises
Our world is full of clowns.

I want to know why I have to go through this
I wish I knew my purpose in life.
Why can't I live in eternal bliss?
That's my idea of life.

Why am I here on this earth?
To live such a messed up life?
Why is the world full of hurt?
The hurt won't quit, regardless of how I try.

People don't understand me
And I really don't understand them.
I wish I could make them see
I could, just tell me when.

I could tell them so much
But I'm not sure they'll listen.
I'd tell them about my problems with drugs and stuff
Just let me know when.

If you want blood you got it
But it shouldn't come to that extreme.
I'm not yet to the bottom of the pit
And I'm not as crazy as I seem.

Life is a very strange thing
And it's hard to understand.
I want to know everything
But I don't even know who I am.

Confusion and Madness Everywhere

Always reaching for something
That never seems to be there
It's a never-ending battle
Trying to make myself care

Seeking shelter from the chaos
There's no place to hide
Confusion and madness everywhere
If they don't care, why should I?

Please stop filling my head
With your delusions of grandeur
There's no room for my ideas
You've filled me with yours

The Challenge of the Madness is Appealing

Too many thoughts
Too many visions
Never seems to stop
Impossible to keep up with the madness
Yet the challenge is appealing
Control doesn't exist
So just stay out of my way

Chaos, Disorder & Mayhem

Pushing myself past the limit
Going way too far
Finding new ways of handling things
You know what those things are
Chaos
Disorder
Mayhem
Added to the stress and pressure
That comes with being me

Just an Idea… at this Point

So, I'll go home and recuperate from years of chaos and torment
Don't give me advice
I don't want to hear it
Let me do this, if I have to
I need to concentrate

The Breakdown Continues…

Too tired
So tired
Spinning thoughts
Sudden realizations
Split decisions
Mixed emotions
Scared
Too much clutter
Crash landing
Help!

Lies, Lies, Lies

Just like a rebirth
My mind is young again
Fear, joy, sorrow, hate
I've left behind the sin

A second chance
A new beginning
No longer hiding behind
Things which are phony

Clean mind and body
It's oh so important
Thank you for today
No longer chemically dependent

The Plea

I need help –
I can't stop doing things I know are wrong.
I'm on self-destruct again
And I'm scared.

Thoughts Turning Sideways

Surrounded by people
Yet still all alone
So much kept inside
Things I don't want known

Must be force of habit
Call it what you will
Thoughts turning sideways
My mind won't be still

Crazy feelings
Even stranger thoughts
Need to find me again
I seem to be lost

Just Along For the Ride

I have absolutely no direction in life and it scares me to death.
What am I supposed to do with my life?
Where do I fit into the plan?
My life happens and I'm just along for the ride.
I can't just sit and hold on to the safety bar anymore.
I've got to get off the ride, even if I have to jump.
If I fall 300 feet – I fall 300 feet.
I really have to do something this time.
But I have no idea what it is.

Limits, Morals and Standards

I may have a volatile personality
Living by my own set of morals and standards
But I've learned something from every mistake I've made
And I've lived my life to its fullest
I have pushed myself to my limits – several times

Upside Down and Sideways

I can't deal with the pressure of trying to be 'real people'
I'm not the type
I've got to be all upside down and sideways

Curse the New Day

The sky screams with the brightness of the new day
A day full of hope
Please
Please
Please
But has the darkness found you already?
Curse the darkness
Curse the new day

Gripping Fear

Fear gripping as if it will never let go
So many fears
Mostly the fear of not being afraid

Highs and Lows

Highs and Lows
There's something to be said about boredom
Highs and Lows
Highs and Lows
STOP!
just stop…

Listen…

He cherished times like these -
The quiet sound of the grasshoppers the only thing breaking the silence.
Every place he has ever been had different sounds -
Yet, all he ever wanted to hear was the sound of the grasshoppers.
Listen…

The Torture That Is Me

Yet another group of people subjected
To the torture that is me.
I should come with a warning.

Painful Sorrow Loves Chaotic Silence

Painful sorrow
Speaks for itself
Speaks for others
Speaks forever
When the silence turns to chaos
Look beyond
Recognize it?
It recognizes you.

Rainbow Out of Nowhere

Rainbow out of nowhere…
He saw a rainbow and thought about me
That's what it's all about
I wish I could tell him how many things make me think about him
every day

Time

Time is an ever-important concept
Your time is as important as my time
Our time is the most important time of all

Strength Enough

Strength is built inside
My inner-workers are on break
It may even be a strike
"Get back to work!"
Maybe this is all the strength I get
I hope it's enough.

The Halls of Confusion

Dizzily wandering the halls of confusion
Each step awkward with anticipation and fear
The silence is as loud as ever
Yet it's cool to the touch
It's nice in here
I shouldn't stay.

Well-Fed Hunger

His hunger for knowledge often led him down paths
he would normally pass by.
He liked to keep himself well-fed.

The Silence Burns His Flesh at Night

The coldness of the silence burns his flesh
As it consumes him
At night he is aware of the existence of everything
He never seems to care what became of the day
Yet he is constantly hungry to find what lies in the night

The Stillness of Chaos

The stillness in the air reminded him of chaos
Trying not to step on the words which had fallen on the floor
The reflection in the mirror was only the beginning of a long story
Winding down

The Wind

The gentle wind keeps time with the breath of those enjoying it
Reminding them of childhood days
Ushering them into adult nights
The wind is what they've been waiting for

Selections From
The
Garage Poems
Collection

The Greatest Compliment I've Ever Received

I wanted to
I truly wanted to

Flabbergasted when you asked
Heartbroken when I couldn't do it

Never again will there ever be
A compliment like the one from thee

Manic Meltdown

Creative energy takes control

Self-Doubt
Literary Caution
Lack of, then overflow of words

"Stand back, folks.
Give the patient some room!"

No nutrients
No sleep
No clues

Unyielding creative tidal wave
What a ride!

We Can Do Better

Foreign lands
Billions spent
Lives lost
Protecting Bush's oil

Council and mayors spend our money passing counterproductive laws
As men barge into our schools and kill our children

Congressmen and senators spend our money spewing hatred against gays
While they fondle young boys behind closed Capitol doors

Highway patrol and sheriffs spend our money harassing Willie's tour bus
As terrorists move about our country freely

Where's Bin Laden?
Probably eating barbecue at the ranch in Crawford!
Our country's a mess
And it doesn't take a genius to figure out why.

Secrets Kept

You may have forgotten
I have not
You may not have thought it was a big deal
I thought it was huge
You may not have wanted anyone to know
I wanted to tell everyone
You may not be bothered by it at all
I feel tormented by it
You may not want it mentioned ever again
I won't say a word.

Abandoned By the Muse

Where, oh, where is the muse?
His influence I've tried not to abuse
I've looked deep within
The material is thin
This may have been a literary ruse.

As the Darkness Creeps and My Day Begins

As the darkness creeps and my day begins
My work starts where their work ends
Nearby dwellers enjoy sweet dreams
My words sleep, too, or so it seems
Fleeting inspiration comes and goes
My list of failures grows and grows
Another sleepless night, O, melancholy day
My tongue isn't tied; it just doesn't know what to say

Trepidation and Just Plain Fear

Trepidation and just plain fear
The need to feel the muse is near
Agonize every turn of phrase
Sit and stare as if in a daze
Chasing words not wanting to be found
Elusive thoughts spin round and round
The need to feel the muse is near
Trepidation and just plain fear

Sugar Pie

White cat
Sweet name
Your eyes…

Today
You
Tried to
Bite my face off!

Who Frightens Me at This Hour?

I hear your noises upon my roof…
Who frightens me at this hour?

Opossum's expedition would more noise make
This time for slumber does the squirrel take
Across the roof our cats would not scurry
Were it mice it sounded as they tried to hurry
Raccoon, perhaps, though he would stead a slower pace
Our visiting bunny never again showed his face

I hear your noises upon my roof…
Who frightens me at this hour?

This Morning I See You in Black and White

This morning I see you in black and white
Gone are the Technicolor carnal lenses of last night
I suppose we should each get on with the day
Forget this transgression; about it nothing to say
The location of our beguilement already escapes me
Your morning reflection tells me it was dark as can be
My shoes, keys and senses I must locate… and quick
I'm suddenly feeling to my stomach I'll be sick!

Royal Blue Sunday

Musky scent pulls me to where it's carefully kept
Hot breath and naturally two-toned hair windswept
Elegant gift movements well learned and steady
Grand stature enhanced by muscles rippled and ready

Take me away my powerful companion

Away from this world
Away from these problems
Away from myself

Together we'd only begun to reach great heights
And each had already seen our share of sights
Whether on the weekend or any other Monday
You were a great horse my Royal Blue Sunday

Trampled

Trampled
Upon

Then a swift kick for good measure
Head held under a constant flow
Force-feeding melancholy rushes

Beaten
And
Battered

Anger stifles cries of support
Fears and phobias dominate as
Dreams of normalcy shatter

The
Bipolar Blues
Collection

Bipolar Blues #3

Manic nights
Melancholy daze
Losing my grip on what little sanity is left
Constant sadness and confusion
A lifelong succession of failures staring me in the face
On the edge?
Over the edge?
The edge hasn't existed for decades
Harder to muster the strength to fight the disorder
Paranoia
Panic
Self-Hatred
A lifetime squandered
Wasting my time, along with everyone else's
Nice, quiet existence interrupted by rock 'n' roll
A stint as the tortured hack
Lifelong dream hindered by criticism
Leading to uncertainty
Melancholy
Sadness
Guilt
Regret
Symptoms and signals at the worst possible times
Fractured and fragile
I know what would ease the pain
Refuse to dance with the devil
Ever again
Years of hypochondria - acute physical pains
Exacerbating years of imagined ones
Pain
Panic
Paranoia
Fear and caution surrounding me
Less fear more caution, please
Handling someone with kid gloves?
Don't touch me at all
I'm burning hotter than ever

Stay away from the flame
Don't test the waters - they're wicked rough
Anger
Sadness
Indifference
Memories mean melancholy
Ambitions mean fear and pain
Accept it for what it is
Get on with it
Blue sky turned grey
Hard rock music turned to quiet strings in the background
Panic
Pain
Insignificance
Dreams of making a difference
Sharing the benefit of my insight and knowledge
100,000 words in a few months
Nobody cares
Not a word of it matters
Insight and knowledge?
It's all drug references and gay porn
Melancholy
Anger
Fear
Don't ever put me away
Don't ever let me do it to myself
Two stints in the nuthouse
A Southern state and on the West Coast
No answers
Only straps and drugs that won't get you high
Their drugs don't solve problems
Their drugs make it easier for those around me to deal with me
Sure, real nice for them… but what about me?
Pain
Panic
Disinterest
Too tired to play the game
No strength or energy to hide the pain
Talk about living a double life?

Too many lives for too many lifetimes
Wearing me down
Anger
Guilt
Regret
Melancholy
Pain
Psyche holding on to a sliver of madness
No sense of self-worth
Given myself plenty of reason
Those who've only just met me should really not judge
Don't tell me how to grieve
Don't tell me how to live
Don't tell me how much time I should spend on my hobbies
Don't tell me how much time to spend on my passions
Don't be jealous of time spent on things other than you
Don't try to cheat or be unfair to me then act surprised when I get mad
Don't look down on me or try to make me feel bad
Don't think I can't read body language and facial expressions
I can read you far better than you think you can read me
Anger
Disappointment
Melancholy
Pain
Majority of years spent wishing I was dead
Reasons bountiful
Cheated my damn self out of a certain amount of life
Time wasted on self-sympathy and doing little else
Still doing little else
Not so sure I'm ready to die
Melancholy
Sadness
Sadness
Sadness
Good friend missed
Upstanding guy who deserved a longer life
Enjoyed himself
Worked hard and cared for his wife

Bumming his beers and cigarettes
Not getting to know him
Not learning from him
Many loved ones lost
Thought of daily
Remembered fondly
Not getting over losing my friend Chuck
Melancholy
Sadness
Sadness
Sadness
Pain
Melancholy
Anger
Fear
Panic
Regret
Pain
More Melancholy
Hard to get along with?
Moods extreme and unpredictable?
Despondent?
Shutting myself off from a world that has driven me mad?
Paranoid and untrusting?
Highs so high I can't stop the adrenaline?
Lows so low I can't stop the tears?
Regret the ride?
Shame for a lifetime of mistakes?
Have to discuss this shit with every Tom, Dick and Harry?
Have to let everyone view my pain just because they want to?
Have to explain myself every five minutes as the moods take control?
Shame
Melancholy
Fear
Regret
Anger
Melancholy
Disappointment

Indifference
Insignificance
Mania
Panic
Pain
Melancholy
Sadness
Anger
Fear
Melancholy
Melancholy
Melancholy
How was your day?

Bipolar Blues #4

Bipolar Blues may not sound all that bad
Manic always leading to incredibly sad
But stories or poems won't make them see
How difficult living with madness can be

One step forward then three steps back
Cliché, indeed, but let's stay on track
Although it all may seem simple and plain
My verse spells out what made me insane

Bipolar Blues #5

Why
Must I
Constantly
Explain myself?
Does the dark explain itself to the light?
Upheaval and mayhem spinning inside
Bipolar Blues
Constantly
Eats me
Up

Bipolar Blues #6

Sunsets are impossible
Sunrises seem numbered
Psyche lies on the floor
As though it slumbered

Disorder demands control
Still throwing new curves
Psyche steady taking hits
As it ducks and swerves

Bystanders always innocent
Or so they're inclined to say
Psyche sluggish and dying
Bipolar Blues wins again today

Bipolar Blues #7

Rough waters, shaky ground define me
Awaiting the storm's cessation
A spectacular from there
A living hell in here
The Bipolar Blues
Manic chases
Sadness and
There's no
Help!

Bipolar Blues #8

When time runs into the chaos it created
Reality explodes sending thoughts into a spin
Remedies always seem crude and outdated
Price paid for a life filled with rage and sin

Moods swing causing tempers to flare
My faults all they ever want to see
Forced to decide under scrutiny's glare
Which personality inside to mold into me

My psyche puts everyone into pure panic
While it leaves them plenty of useful clues
Either in the dumps or completely manic
Hands full dealing with the Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #9

As chaos and mayhem take control
Just try to put on a good show
The Bipolar Blues once more
Hindered from trying to
Live a normal life
Those around me
Feel the burn
Just like
Me

Bipolar Blues #10

None of my senses wish to welcome the new day
Hold on to the comfort of darkness
Where no one watches what I do or say

Dawn brings new fears adding to the old
As daylight takes control with a vengeance
The morning sky so blue and the sun so gold

Fears subside while daylight teases glimpses of hope
Simple tasks timidly faced with a struggle
Already a hint someone should hold on to the rope

Morning busy with mood swings, self-hatred and worry
Disgust with my performance already
The dark clouds of melancholy return in a hurry

As the noon sun shines the day already full of clues
I'm tormented as my psyche decides
If today there'll be manic mayhem or the Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #11

Time
Is all
It takes to
Heal all my wounds?
None of my wounds have ever really healed
None of my wounds ever likely to heal
Bipolar Blues
Opens them
All the
Time

Bipolar Blues #12

Gnarly
Manic mayhem
Adrenaline rushes
Creativity then explodes
Prolific nights shun dark and torpid days
Inactivity then proceeds
Suicidal brushes
My life sure is
Gnarly

Bipolar Blues #13

Moods swing as inner chaos spins
Confusion wins
As wild storms rage
Clues fill each page

Symptoms worsen then quickly veer
Myself I jeer
Wild actions tell
At times it's hell

Within sacred walls try to hide
Others just chide
I'm paying dues
Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #14

On the
Brink
Of madness from

Four Decades
Spent singing those
Dreaded
Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #15

I know it looks as if I'm not trying
While inside daily parts of me are dying
To untrained eyes I just seem to be a mess
While I hide behind long hair and shabby dress

Again attempting to sleep my life away
While apologizing for what I do and say
People dictating the way my life should go
While their own misdeeds they ever fail to know

Want to live in seclusion, hide away and be reclusive
While those around me insist on being overly intrusive
What should be simple tasks to me right now are hard
While my psyche lies on the floor crumpled and charred

Bipolar Blues #16

Yesterdays turn circles like dogs chasing their tails
Life passes me by while I sit here biting my nails
The brighter side shows I could still be doing rails
Still, not much I can do as my fractured psyche fails

New symptoms already act as if they want to stay
Nothing really helps get through the wretched day
Everyone around me watching what I do and say
More than my share of dues I seem doomed to pay

Judged by bystanders who barely know my name
Even though doing so is more than a little lame
Sometimes the whole thing fills me with shame
Bipolar Blues shouldn't be taken as a joke or a game

Bipolar Blues #17

Poetic silence
Like a misty fog
Follows
Creative misfortune
Shoved down their throats

"Look at me!"
"Listen to me!"
"Read my words!"

STOP!

There's no depth!
There's no significance!
There's no quality!

Nowhere to go from here
The Bipolar Blues
Wins again today

Bipolar Blues #18

Storms
Rage as
My psyche
Tries to keep up
Wicked pain destroys my progress daily
New symptoms overshadow all the old
While I'm being
Bested by
Raging
Storms

Bipolar Blues #19

Always want to change my moods at their will
Thorazine, lithium, this, that, and the other pill
Psychotropic drugs not the answer for me still
I'd rather not turn the burn into a flavorless chill

I'll decide for myself the best time and the place
To whom and where I feel like showing my face
If I can't get through this with a little bit of grace
It wouldn't be hard to disappear without a trace

Guess I'll just pick my burnt psyche up off the floor
And try to make myself wander out the front door
Doesn't matter if a person is filthy rich or dirt poor
Bipolar Blues makes one feel like an incredible boor

Bipolar Blues #20

Sun tries to shine as dark clouds linger
Not in the mood to welcome the new day
Feel like giving the outside world the finger
Tell the wretched new day to go away

Constant adventures to never leaving the house
A lot of things are no longer quite the same
Scuff around feeling like a loser and a louse
Leaning towards moving and taking a new name

My struggles to others don't really seem to matter
While my neglecting their need for attention they accuse
Then they wonder why I'm acting like a mad-hatter
As my psyche finally gives in to the Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #21

Blue
Skies and
Calm waters
Soon sadly chime
Storms of self-hatred and melancholy
Rushes of energy drive depression
Try as I may
I always
Wind up
Blue

Bipolar Blues #22

This may be one of the worst episodes I've had
My hermitage a good clue I'm again going mad
And although you may think I'm just a bit sad
Imagine going through life as a boor and a cad

Not sure when I'll stop acting like such a goon
It doesn't really look as if it will be very soon
Bad enough you've seen me become a big loon
You've often seen it happen way before noon

Inner chaos and turmoil alternate taking their cues
All while I'm paying more than my share of dues
Don't bother with rose lenses or any other hues
Can't see through the fog of these Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #23

Once again losing any sense of what control I've ever had
Moods swing and curses fly
Try and try
Don't ask why

Melancholy in mad rushes follows sudden bursts of adrenaline
Senses wander and lose their way
Waste each day
Nothing to say

Bipolar Blues #24

Alive
And still kicking
But myself is what I'm
Kicking as a constant battle
Just destroys me on the inside and out
Slow and painful process as the
Dreaded Bipolar Blues
Keeps eating me
Alive

Bipolar Blues #25

The storm rages as my psyche withers and crawls
Symptoms persist though I hide behind sacred walls
Others quick to find fault and become admonishing
Then my taking umbrage they seem to find astonishing

Thinking it's merely a matter of me deciding to get well
They somehow must think I've chosen to live in this hell
The Thorazine shuffle is what they always want me to do
Forcing me to a lifetime on display like a monkey in a zoo

Along with my fight I've got its effect on them to think about
So I wind up wandering around feeling like a loser and a lout
My problems didn't suddenly appear without any preceding clues
This is my fourth tiresome decade living with these Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #26

I never imagined a fight this long
Manic mayhem
Always then
Leads to
Sloth

Bipolar Blues #27

As I realize I haven't much careless time left to kill
I want to scream but can barely muster a weak trill
Sadness sways from energy hitting in mad rushes
My psyche judged and discussed in quiet hushes

While I try to concentrate on finding my way to shore
My nuances add up with those around me keeping score
Already given up on being normal or even slightly vogue
Turning into a mad recluse and a temperamental rogue

The ideas of the disorder even more bizarre than my own
All this time thinking my wild oats were long ago sown
Finding myself too tired to decide exactly which me to be
Bipolar Blues keeps hammering away at the best parts of me

Bipolar Blues #28

If this is the last day
Not much left to say
Nay!
The most important things unsaid
Plenty of more opportunities lie ahead

Days tagged and numbered
Chased and hunted as I slumbered
Say!
Don't just sit there staring as you wither
Your manic rants no better than when you blither

Weakness enabled by intense pain
Questioning whether or not I'm even sane
Hey!
Madness is in the eyes of those who behold
Bipolar Blues shouldn't make you crumble or fold

Bipolar Blues # 29

Try to maintain composure as new fears surmount
Symptoms multiply quicker than anyone can count
Hold on to sanity firmly grasping notions of the truth
Wild displays of misplaced anger, suspicion and uncouth

Definite pattern of blatant misdeeds and acting splenetic
Certainly it's probable the torments have been genetic
Prolific euphoria-filled nights offer next-day sadness
Blended waves of brilliance afforded by the madness

Bipolar Blues #30

Daybreak greeted again with anticipation and hope like a mother greets her newborn……Anticipation and Hope

Prepared to cherish and mold the new day into an experience based on pride and joy……..Pride and Joy

Stamina and patience help hues of rich gold and deep blue push away the darkness……...Stamina and Patience

Quiet morning inevitably and rudely disrupted by mad rushes of anxiety and mania……..Anxiety and Mania

Thoughts led by confusion and chaos begin spinning taunting daily afternoon circles……..Confusion and Chaos

Moods swing wildly as the evening battle for clarity and control eats away precious time…….Clarity and Control

Sadness and melancholy aggressively fill the tiring night air with a wet, heavy fogginess…….Sadness and Melancholy

Adrenaline wanes allowing anticipation and hope to sneak back into the cerebral queue……..Anticipation and Hope

Bipolar Blues #31

Burned slowly while guilty bystanders refused to look
Ashes flew wildly as symptoms persisted by the book
Stole time and energy from others like a random crook
Waited out each episode no matter how long they took

Senses were heightened and often led thoughts easily astray
Practice made perfect the ability to hide the irrational decay
Fears and phobias blocked paths at each and every crossway
Symptoms hindered the process of making emotional headway

Words and actions intentionally bordered on being splenetic
Disorders seemingly blossomed from ones original or genetic
Verse or prose created in attempts at being even slightly noetic
Usually ended up coming across as morose and totally pathetic

Layers of restless chaos kept born intelligence at a disadvantage
Lame excuses didn't cover decades of abuse and vagabondage
Never able to deal with others' feeble attempts to micromanage
Bipolar Blues left my psyche in the pitiful state of an overdosage

Bipolar Blues #32

1. Melancholy puddles
lifted
by
the returning sun.

Critters and birds
share in
my rejoice.

2. Energy jolts
quietly
slipped
into the crowd.

Friends and strangers
stare at
my struggle.

3. Wandering thoughts
spilled
messily
on the floor.

Rants and raves
glare into
my eyes.

4. Mood swings
expected
further
back and forth.

Jumps and hurdles
dare torture
my psyche.

5. Bipolar Blues
jostled
by
wild manic mayhem.

Fears and phobias
blare into
my mind.

Bipolar Blues #33

Inner chaos ties my hands
As I'm continuously belted by my disorder

"Why can't you just be happy?"
"From where do these problems stem?"
"Has this death wish haunted you for long?"
"Have you been taking your meds?"

I have a few questions for all of you:

Why do my moods always have to suit your needs?
From where does your need to analyze my psyche derive?
Has my constant refusal to engage been all this time
unascertained?
Have you forgotten the boring torpidity my meds created in me?

Inner chaos ties my hands
As I'm continuously belted by those Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #34

Emotions ooze from overabundant pores then flow rich and heavy
both inside and out
Tears and laughter bore themselves into fits of melancholy and
adrenalin-fueled rage
Darkness helps silence conceal vague truths as obvious torments
encourage symptoms
Voices scream over mellow background sounds of songbird chatter
and schoolyard glee
Monstrous pounding of heartbeats fails to keep tempo with mad
rushes of fear and doubt
Early morning sadness pushes noon self-hatred into seeking
midnight carnal escapades
Strange spinning thoughts cram nooks and crannies left by
sporadic waves of creativity
Lost souls and comrades passed mourned daily exacerbating guilt
and pressing issues
Aches and pains creep behind decades of carefree debaucheries
racing mindless antics
Inertia and disinterest distract guilty bystanders while wild ideas
are formed and plotted
Hunger to create stifled as a fractured psyche remains hammered
by those Bipolar Blues

Bipolar Blues #35

I'm fully aware how odd it all looks
All I want to do is write verse and read books
Still not ready for any kind of journey
My next one may even be on a gurney

And though I already feel lower than low
I'm ever being thrown strange new lines to tow
Pummeled by chaos tossed around by huge waves
Cursing my way through incoherent wild raves

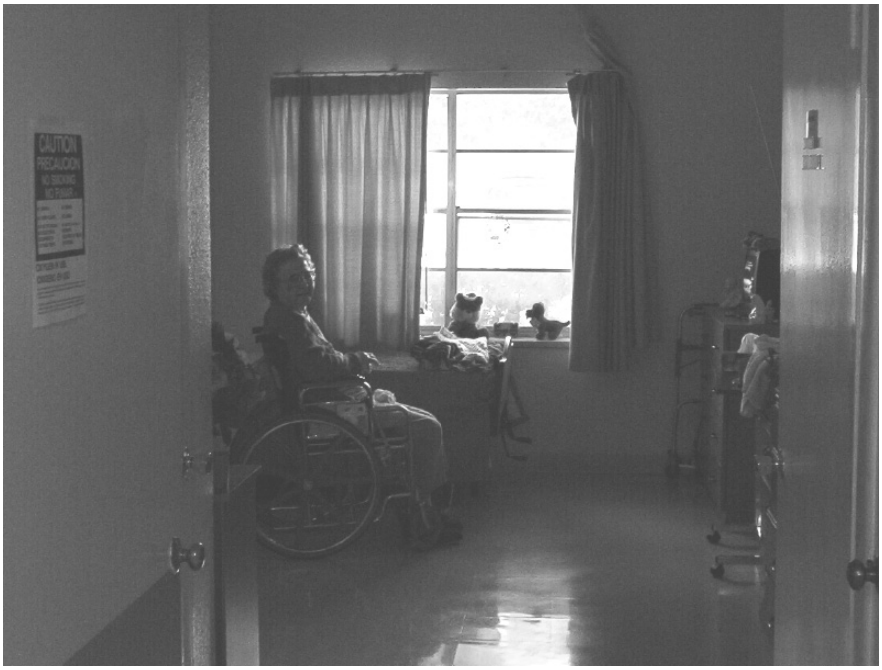
Decades of death-defying acts and scandal
The burn too much for most people to handle
Not much more burning can I handle either
From the Bipolar Blues I soon need a breather

Bipolar Blues #41

Bemused by
instant judgments of
people who should not
only be supportive but whom also
lack the knowledge needed for
any kinds of assumptions to be made
regarding the mental health of others

Befuddled by
laborious thoughts and
unforgiving fatigue making
every movement and concentration
sound with decades of misuse and abuse

Other Favored Works



Nephi

Friend of environment and animals
Music pimp to friends and family
CD and computer wizard
Caregiver extraordinaire
Master of photo art
Parent to our pets
Partner in crime
Chosen love
Nephi
Oh
My
Nephi
Lifesaver
Support lender
Advisor to friends
Aide to people in need
Respected eldest sibling
Champion for many causes
Advocate for the young and the old
Good example of clean and hard-working

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Parent to our pets
Partner in crime
Chosen love
Nephi
Oh

The Intensity of the Burn

The intensity of the burn wasn't expected
I've burned like this before
You can feel the heat if you want to
But from a distance
I've burned others
Some I'm sure are still burning

The Hindrance of Memory Lane

Opening old wounds adding hindrance to ones never healed
Memory lane not always paved with gold
Feeling quite aged
And not like fine wine

To Melea

Gentle Soul
Temporarily lost
Maintain well-being
Whatever the cost

Too many of the wrong people
Try not to trust
Good health and total control
I've learned, mean: don't rush

Consideration and concern
For others you show
Yes, live, but, please learn
Their true intentions you won't always know

My friendship and love
Always with you, will be
With knowledge, strength and help from above
You'll prosper, you'll see…

Your Baby Is So… Interesting

They call it constructive criticism
It feels like they are telling me I have ugly children

Are The Words For Them?

When the work is done and the words are written
Learn how to react when the people aren't smitten
A determination, I guess there must be
Are the words for them or am I writing for me?

The Master of Space and Time

Need to get away from the hustle and bustle
Haul ass and enjoy the music of Leon Russell
His music does make mind and body feel prime
After all, he is the Master of Space and Time

Inner Turmoil Chases Me Out

As I shy away from life and try to hide within
Inner turmoil chases me out
Lifelong issues and demons take turns holding my psyche hostage
Don't forget to smile!
Nobody can see the pain
As long as I'm smiling
Confusion doesn't have to mean madness
Madness doesn't have to make one a bad person
And along the same lines, don't glamorize the disorder
There's nothing hip or exciting about losing control of your mind and emotions
I don't think people realize how traumatic this thing can be
On a daily basis
If you think it's hard for you to never know who I'M gonna be
Imagine how hard it would be if you never knew who YOU were gonna be!
Welcome to my world… don't be afraid
It isn't always this chaotic
At times, the colors are so bright it almost hurts my eyes
No records or CDs could top the constant symphony in my head
A library full of books I have sat down and read
Soon, quiet days reading turn into chaotic nights screaming and slamming doors
Violent bouts of self-hatred
Paranoia and panic
Melancholy and just plain sadness
But just because I look like a homeless man and walk around talking to myself
Don't let your eyes of judgment linger too long
Take a look at the man in the mirror
I may not be perfect
And you may not be able to understand me
Unlike most, though, I am aware of my shortcomings
And I defy any, well, most, of you to withstand one week of
The stuff I've dealt with in my head for forty years

The Day's Thanks and Apology for Nephi

No one has ever been so patient with me
And proud of me someday I hope you will be
Though our world's been a zoo
The work is for you
I'm really not such a bad guy you will see

It Doesn't Judge You

Put your game face on
Don't let them see the pain
Everyone loves the highs
No one understands the lows
Days full of fun and laughter
Nights full of sorrow and pain
Anger, melancholy and sadness take control
Hold on, it's going to be a bumpy ride!
Remember the shoes with no laces?
Remember the plastic forks and spoons?
Remember the shitty drugs three times a day?
Remember the hourly suicide watch?
Remember the eyes of judgment on the other side of the glass?
"Watch the crazy man.
Let's see what he's gonna do next!"
Of course you don't remember, you weren't there
If you don't feel the pain
Try not to judge it
It doesn't judge you

The Moods Swing at Their Own Pace

Your struggle to keep up with my moods
Isn't nearly as difficult as mine
Your impatience for the depression to turn back into mania
Doesn't matter any more than my own
Your disappointment in me
Can't compare to my disappointment in myself
Your constant scrutiny of my psyche
Won't speed up or slow down the process

Aunt Barbara

Mom's sister
My aunt
Large family gatherings
The best ones at your home
Men and boys out back frying fish – drinking beer – laughing, telling stories
Women and girls in the kitchen cooking – playing cards – laughing, telling stories
Deer heads and antlers staring me down
You were always the one cheering me up
Lakes, boats and learning to water-ski
Deer leases, campsites and cookouts
Margie Lane
Airline Drive
Skating rink and flea markets
My favorite childhood memories
Mom's sister
My aunt
You seemed to me to have all the answers
People came to you often with questions
Stating facts with authority
Everything under control

Compassionate yet strong
Outspoken and well-spoken
Mom's sister
My aunt
A California visit gone awry
Often thought of with regret
Busily trying to convince you I was grown
Steadily proving to everyone otherwise
Sharing your pain during one of our family's greatest losses
Uncle Arnold I loved, respected, revered and, of course, still do
Your strength and dignity during the storm
Will always be remembered and admired
Mom's sister
My aunt
An adult relationship
Candid conversations
Your acceptance of my chosen love
My respect for you only strengthened
The relationship not understood
Or appreciated until I was older
I love you Mom's sister
I love you my aunt
I love you Aunt Barbara

Really No Surprise

Relationships falling apart as I hide inside the world I've built within
Much patience needed
People confusing my withdrawal attempt as laziness or indifference
Warnings not heeded

Creative energy flowing necessarily within like blood and oxygen
Follow the muse
Words spilling onto the floor then scampering into the darkness
Leaving few clues

Hiding the symptoms becoming tedious as my psyche once again tilts
New oddities arise
Moments of sanity painfully hiding under layers of mania and madness
Really no surprise

Samuel

Little Big Man
Only months old

Light hair
Bright eyes
Big smile

Trepidation of all the new faces
Yet, trusting as you feel our love

Born into a beautiful and loving family

You'll be given all the tools for success
Use those tools wisely

It's a big world, Samuel
And it's all yours.

Is It Now I Miss The Lifers?

Large group
Perhaps slightly too large

Loving group
Perhaps slightly too loving

Trusting group
Perhaps slightly too trusting

Accepting group
Perhaps slightly too accepting

Actions uncontrolled
Antics embarrassing
Vices obvious
Prices paid

Creative tidal wave forthcoming
Poetic mania withstanding
Silence chaotically orchestrated
Melancholy quietly endured

Mood swings witnessed
Confessions made
Important dates missed
People thinking they've been dissed

Is it now I breathe?
Is it now my blood flows?
Is it now the daylight forcefully takes control from the night?
Is it now I miss the Lifers?

The Joke Is Me

Joke about the invisible bugs
Joke about the wild mood swings
Joke about the unexplained voices
Joke about the impetuous carnal desires
Joke about the strings of sleepless nights
Joke about the constant melancholy days
Joke about the lack of ordinary hygiene
Joke about the non-communication

I laugh not with myself
I laugh at myself

The joke is not on me
The joke is me.

Chaotic Love Not Confined to a Species

Differences far outnumber the similarities
While you coexist as peacefully as possible
One quiet, calm and demure
The other bold, peevish and taxing
Favorite household furniture and spaces
Sometimes pleasantly shared but mostly enjoyed separately
Petty spats and enormous altercations
Brief moments of tenderness and long periods of accordance
Never will the adventure get boring
And never will our love cease or waiver

~To Buffy and Harvey ~

I'm Thankful Every Day

Day of thanks
Why only one a year?

I'm thankful every day for my breath
I'm thankful every day for my chosen love
I'm thankful every day for my friends and family
I'm thankful every day for my food and shelter
I'm thankful every day for my literary adventure
I'm thankful every day for my quality of life

Day of thanks?
I just call it Thursday

My Disorder and Me

Thoughts of the chaos give me such a huge fright
Though a little chaos I really don't mind
Reality is often withheld from sight.

To my faults I have often found myself blind
Or have I so far pretended not to know?
The truth is there for them all someday to find.

Into people's lives this storm often does blow
Those people mistaking my tamest for wild
They force me to give them a truly bent show.

Show them all the mood swings and mayhem are mild
No one's understood and I sure wish they had
I've been dealing with this since I was a child.

So, don't wonder why in the world I'm so sad.
The world is what's driven me completely mad.

Should They Be Delving Into My Mind?

Sad
Happy
Both at once
Again today
Mood swings take control
How do I explain it?
Why should I even have to?
Are they owed an explanation?
Should they be delving into my mind?
Should they be frightened of what they might find?

Corky

Climbed then admired California hills
Gentle wind blowing your black mane and tail
Tried to remember the saying "speed kills"
Preferred to explore and make our own trail.
Together we had some real gnarly thrills
And once nearly needed to post a bail
The best friend I had at the time, of course
Corky was my all-time favorite horse.

We've Been One

Mine
And yours
Became ours
And stayed that way
For over a decade now, we've been one
For over a decade now, we've been two
Each completing
The other
Two halves
Us

The Year My Left Lung Collapsed #2

Doctors acting like The Three Stooges
Walls lined with medical students
"Lie down, here's a shot, arm up."
Cut a hole in my side
Shove in a thin tube
Wait as it pulls
Black liquid
From my
Lungs
Thick
And black
Long, deep sleep
Awaken with
Shades, headphones, TV
"Time for the tube to go!"
Parents asked to leave the room
"No shot. Turn over." Yank it out.
Parents back – thin, bloody tube on bed.

Thank You, Mom

I've
Let you
Down in so
Many ways, I
May never prove to make it up to you
And still you've always been there for me when
I have reached out
Urgent hands
Thank you
Mom
How
You gave
Me a chance
To live my life
Never knew how much I needed your help
Until the times I needed it the most
No conditions
You love me
Thank you
Mom

Clandestine Night in a Galveston Fog

A
Thick mist
Engulfs the
Sand and rough surf
Tourists and locals blanketed by haze
Pyramids, volcano and water slides
Seawall, the Strand
Clandestine
In the
Fog

Shared

Shared
Spaces
Together
Or separate
We have lived here peacefully together
We have lived here peacefully together
Separate or
Together
Spaces
Shared

Rachel

Oh
How I
Love to read
Books to you and
Rachel, your smile makes me want to smile, too
Your tears make my tears want to flow for you
Wherever you
Go please know
We love
You

Quiet

Quiet
Inside and out
Brief periods of rest
Calm waters follow wicked storms
Pull in the oars give my psyche respite
No flares, signals or reaching arms
Don't need your assistance
Need my peace and
Quiet

“Honey” – Muskogee Queen

Honey
Muskogee Queen
Friend in thick, thin or worse
12th Street palace properly fraught
With rock stars, bohemians and poets
Sheepish grin or chuckle if caught
A graceful whispered curse
Muskogee Queen
Honey
Honey
Muskogee Queen
In spite of our drinking
Invites hundreds feeding us Slick’s
Kisses and hugs for each and every one
Doctors, lawyers, we unkempt hicks
However drunk, stinking
Muskogee Queen
Honey
Honey
Muskogee Queen
Bountiful tales swell songs
Glamour resides at perfect hue
Accepting others just part of God’s call
Bold enough to be slightly blue
Ignores our beers and bongs
Muskogee Queen
Honey
Honey
Muskogee Queen
Welcoming home and heart
Her smile makes me want to smile
Laughter from her stirs happiness in all
No disguise; would never beguile
Unvarnished from the start
Muskogee Queen
Honey

As I Sit in My Room Full of Music and Books

As I sit in my room full of music and books wondering when the
right words will come

Not knowing where I'll place them yet still hoping they'll decide
to spin again though

I feel selfish or stingy wishing for their appearance since they've
past been so bountiful

Why have they come and gone all these years?
Why do I always give them my full attention?
Why are they so reluctant and stubborn?
Why do they always come around when I'm least ready?
Why do they become agitated if I sleep or eat?
Why won't they let me leave from behind these sacred walls?

Rushes of energy race my heartbeat for control while the
adrenaline fuels the madness

Dark clouds of melancholy then torture the words back into hiding
just as feverishly

As I sit in my room full of music and books wondering where the
right words have gone

MELISSA

Melissa I feel unoriginal placing birthday wishes in a song or a poe**m**
Effectual sentiments already scribed by writers of a higher degre**e**
Love and respect should be shown rather than described after al**l**
Iambic pentameter wouldn't be any better than everyday graffit**i**
So I'll try to offer my respect for the mother you are to your kid**s**
Stirred with love for a sibling not wavering since the kids were u**s**
And hope the mixture resembles how I feel about my sister Meliss**a**.

Fear

Fear drives the need to become burglarproo**f**
Eyes peeled for guilty bystanders or evidenc**e**
Acts of aggression stir the hints of a phobi**a**
Resilience hindered by overwhelming fea**r**

WORDS

Whether they come few and far between or enough to fill a wheelbarro**w**
Obscure treasures are dragged around with bland verse like weighted carg**o**
Random thoughts and well-made points constantly at war with each othe**r**
Demanding everyone's attention while abhorring distractions of any kin**d**
Slipping in and out of cerebral crevices unaware of their perfect sacredness**s**

BETH

Beth your beauty inside and out is too immense for a blur**b**
Elaborate verse hardly pays your friendship worthy tribut**e**
Thanks so much for the encouragement to perfect my craf**t**
Happiness and prosperity are meant for people like you Bet**h**

MOTHER

Mother I haven't always shown you how truly grateful I a**m**
Obduracy hasn't subsided since the days we lived off Canin**o**
Tirades resulted in lethargy while your efforts were your bes**t**
However I always mistakenly felt I was far above reproac**h**
Eventually learning my imbalance of chemicals drove m**e**
Ridiculously far from the unconditional love of my mothe**r**

Hurt

Hatred and bigotry spewed in an undercover hus**h**
Useless laws are offered from a hypocritical men**u**
Religion and politics turn men against each othe**r**
Trying to force their beliefs and make people hur**t**

A Perfect Rain Quietly Saddens

A perfect rain quietly saddens the already bleak reality of the circle of life
Expectations of rejoice and wonderment hanging ever impossibly overhead
Only surviving family members and friends know this kind of a broken heart
Hearts ripped from inside then punctured and wrung like soaked washcloths
While mad rushes of memories flood the senses with uncontrollable emotions
Selfishness drives the wish to delay the finality of the inevitable outcome and
Fairness dictates the necessity to accept nature taking its destined course as
A perfect rain quietly saddens the already bleak reality of the circle of life

Flora

Flora we've known each other so long I can't remember a time in my life when I didn't know you; O, how I wish we could sit and chat about those times right now like we did not all that very long ago. We'd sit in your kitchen next door drinking coffee watching the children walk to school. You'd tell me stories about my Grandma Atteberry and I'd see in your eyes that you missed her as much as I do. You'd tell me about working at the cafeteria and I'd tell you about working at Jiffy Lube. We'd laugh about how similar people are even in separate places and times. We'd trade stories about our families and childhoods, always with me wondering if you noticed how my stories were short because I was so eager to hear yours. Again we'd wonder at the unlikely similarities in our differences. The short walk back home next door would follow promises that we'd sit and chat more often. And then when Nephi and I would visit you at the nursing home we'd hear your latest tales about the people who lived and worked in the nursing home and how you enjoyed watching "Everybody Loves Raymond" at 6: 00 p.m. every evening. It turns out I then started watching it, too! As I had before, we'd leave with me promising to stop by to sit and chat with you more often. I'm sorry, Flora, for not sitting and chatting with you more often then and that now I can't sit and chat with you at all. I love you, Flora. As He wraps you in His arms and takes you home, a huge part of me is going with you. I was blessed to have you as a lifelong friend and now He will be blessed to have you back.

A BROKEN MAN

Another day full of sadness and doubt blankets a life-changing phobi**a**

Backbeat of a nervous pulse exacerbates the phobia's ability to distur**b**
Rambling thoughts and depressing images puddle like murky rainwate**r**
Oafish and misanthropic voices constantly scream in inner concertin**o**
Knavish behavior stirs mistrust branding the day like a huge birthmar**k**
Empathy from outside temporarily soothes a blistered burning psych**e**
Nagging melancholy and misplaced anger vigorously demand attentio**n**

Moods swing faster and further each day leaving most bystanders glu**m**
Alienation and loutish tendencies fiercely replace sociability and charism**a**
Numbness of the soul just a sorrowful component of being a broken ma**n**

RAPID CYCLING BIPOLAR

Rant and rave again quickly before you hoot and holle**r**
Act like you aren't about to succumb to a new phobi**a**
Push past certain limits with small steps or a giant lea**p**
Identify symptoms then try to escape them like Houdini
Defy death and remind your nerves where they dangle**d**

Celebrate your calmness as you go into a full-blown pani**c**
Yank the chains of others and show obvious abnormalit**y**
Cling to the notion you don't need anything psychotropi**c**
Leave them guessing when your ship will make landfal**l**
Intelligently explain then bid the usual rules arrivederc**i**
Never admit you know you won't be improving very soo**n**
Grind everything to a quick halt at the first sign of a sna**g**

Bring everyone's spirit down like yours to the size of a nu**b**
Idiosyncratically combine Hank and Ozzy with Pavarott**i**
Play the happy fool as your psyche slowly burns to a cris**p**
Only shed a little light on why you feel like a desperad**o**
Lean on your friends when they answer your pitiful cal**l**
Attempt to control the moods in any type of crowd or aren**a**
Realize they'll never understand being rapid cycling bipola**r**

DEFEATED

Doubt and worry overwhelm as my psyche hits the floor with a heavy thu**d**
Even those who should understand act as if these problems are new to m**e**
Fragments of thoughts dangle while knowledge and ideas stare in disbelie**f**
Early detection doesn't make a difference if you let the symptoms run fre**e**
Agitated nerves wind tightly during the emotional whirlwind and euphori**a**
Thorazine burns while lithium tricks the senses into believing they are fi**t**
Educated guesses determine my fate as phobias and disorders gang up on m**e**
Demands of normalcy hinder me trying to keep from going completely ma**d**

BURNS

Burns, I sure wish I could act aplom**b**
Unfortunately my life is one long snaf**u**
Rude silence; don't watch my psyche withe**r**
Neglecting friendships is like committing a si**n**
So, I'll make amends to my good friend Steve Burn**s**

ROSS KIDS

Ragtag words won't suffice; it must be a humdinge**r**
Only heartfelt emotions while trying not to overd**o**
So much I've missed with such few scattered visit**s**
Scant glimpses of merriment preserved like treasure**s**

Keen familial senses quickly rush leaving me awestruc**k**
Illuminated rooms sing as cameras flash like paparazz**i**
Determined to capture special moments to be cherish**d**
Symbols of how proud I am to be an uncle to the Ross kid**s**

Mark Raymond Atteberry lives in Houston with his partner of twelve years, listens to the music of legendary musician Leon Russell and enjoys the works of Rimbaud, Whitman, Ginsberg, Dostoyevsky, Kerouac and Burroughs. This is Mark's first poetry publication.

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